
**THE AMERICAN TOUCH
IN MICRONESIA**

by David Nevin
Norton, 1977
224 pp. \$9.95
L of C 76-58339
ISBN 0-393-05617-1

**TIN ROOFS AND
PALM TREES: A Report on
the New South Seas**

by Robert Trumbull
Univ. of Washington, 1977
302 pp. \$17.95
L of C 76-49164
ISBN 0-295-95544-9

**WHITE HOUSE WATCH:
The Ford Years**

by John Osborne
Cartoons by Ranan Lurie
New Republic Books, 1977
482 pp. \$11.95
L of C 77-5321
ISBN 0-915220-26-1

Captain Cook (1728-79) wrote about them first. But little dependable up-to-date information on the island peoples of the Pacific and their problems has been available. These books fill the gap. Nevin, a former *Life* writer, focuses on the islands and atolls of Micronesia, occupied in turn by Spain, Germany, and Japan, and since 1947 administered as a UN Trust Territory by the United States. Informed by extensive interviews with both Micronesians and American officials, he attributes the corruption and unrest troubling these strategically important dots on the map to fumbling U.S. neocolonialism. Trumbull, who long covered the South Pacific for the *New York Times*, credits the United States with successful educational programs in Micronesia but wonders if the artificially unified "rusted Trust" has a political future. Trumbull's readable report ranges far beyond Micronesia. He covers nations as diverse as Papua New Guinea, which became independent in 1973, and the tiny island Republic of Nauru, "acre for acre and body for body" the world's richest nation, but already well on its way to having 80 percent of its land area strip-mined for phosphate.

After five volumes of *The Nixon Watch*, the wisest of White House reporters turns his attention to Gerald Ford. Osborne's portrait of the man who could grill his own breakfast muffins but garble a toast is remarkable. He gives us wry perception, revealing anecdotes, "background" interviews (on everything from arms control to Zimbabwe) and a rare tone (subjective but sober, critical but calm). Most of this material originally appeared weekly in Osborne's *New Republic* column and is arranged chronologically; the reader follows the Ford regency "live," from the Nixon Pardon, through convention victory, to election defeat. Osborne discerns real accomplishments during the Ford years, particularly in foreign policy. Ultimately, however, he echoes the former President's staff chiefs Donald Rumsfeld and Richard Cheney: "Good old Jerry was too damned good for his own good."